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ABSTRACT

Many administrators and full-time faculty regard adjuncts or part-time faculty as "fringe elements," the "have-nots," the "homeless" of the academic world, or worst of all as "invisible necessities." Adjuncts at the University of West Florida (UWF) are not listed in any campus directory, nor are they invited to all-campus social activities, although the support staff usually receives invitations. Their accomplishments are rarely noticed, with little or no acknowledgment from campus and local presses for successes. Adjuncts are "cheap labor" and are in plentiful supply. Perhaps not all adjuncts are being exploited by administrators or the Powers-That-Be, but they are willfully ignored and woefully underpaid in comparison to their full-time counterparts. Gender could play a part in some of the inequity of recognition and composition. For example 12 of the adjuncts in the UWF English Department are female--only 3 are male. Adjuncts play as important a role as "regular" teachers do in students' lives and in their academic successes. Most adjuncts have taught in other school systems and have had other academic experiences; most do not neglect scholarship. As professionals, adjuncts must demand full academic recognition as scholars and full monetary recognition as well. Sojourner Truth once asked the question, "Ain't I a Woman?" so should adjuncts ask "Ain't I a Scholar?" (Contains 14 references; a list of questions to consider is appended.) (CR)

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ED 414 582

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Conference on College Composition and Communication
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Ain't I a Scholar?:

Reflection and Scholarship in the Land of Part-Time Faculty

[TRANSPARENCIES #1 and #2/DOONESBURY CARTOONS]

How many of you are currently employed as adjuncts or part-time faculty (defined as teaching one, two, or possibly three courses)? How many of you consider yourselves to be damaged goods, academic stepchildren, or vocational cripples? Are any of you women "call girls"? According to what I have read and observed, many of us are thought of and described in such terms, though probably not so colorfully or explicitly. Evidently many administrators and full-time faculty (whom I call "regulars" or "real faculty") regard adjuncts as "fringe elements"--the "have nots"--the "homeless" of the academic world-- or, worst of all--faceless and nameless--"invisible necessities." In Florida, we adjuncts may be thought of as swamp creatures trying to reach the academic mainland, grasping for the flotsam and jetsam that may come drifting our way.

Actually, adjuncts are not really thought of much at all. One of the last memos I received was addressed to faculty and adjuncts--evidently adjuncts are not considered faculty. The Department's recording secretary divides the attendees into "faculty" and "visitors"--guess who the

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"visitors" are? Why shouldn't adjuncts be listed as "adjunct faculty"? Or even "non-voting attendees"? Are we merely visitors--temporary company? Maybe so. Adjuncts at UWF are not listed in any campus directory, nor are they invited to all-campus social activities (although the support staff usually receives invitations). We have no role in commencement ceremonies, even though we have taught and advised many of the graduates. Our accomplishments are rarely noticed, and we get little, if any, acknowledgment from the campus and local presses for successes, large or small. Of course, adjuncts are not eligible to receive distinguished teaching awards or any other academic kudos on campus, so it is difficult to establish credibility.

As you know, adjuncts are cheap labor and are in plentiful supply. In a recent interview (1996), Dr. James Sledd, a retired professor at the University of Texas at Austin, asserted that "University administrators employ adjuncts so that they can put money into projects that they really care about--typically into projects that please their wealthy and powerful patrons" (qtd. in the adjunct advocate (taa) 28). What are these projects? Are they centered on cosmetic external improvements or large research or travel grants to selected full-timers in favored departments? Does grass-roots improvement, such as reduced class loads and better reimbursement for adjuncts, ever come into the picture? Who knows? Who cares?

Dr. Sledd, in an earlier article (1991) published in

the Journal of Advanced Composition (JAC), rejects the argument that "money is unavailable"--the argument so often heard ad nauseam by adjuncts. He contends that "inadequate support of an essential program is the most wasteful of possible alternatives" (279). Inadequate support. Since adjuncts undergird the undergraduate programs, especially in composition courses (which all seem to agree are necessary), should they not receive adequate support in every way, including receiving a fair wage? Charlie Reese, a writer for King Features Syndicate, believes that "if a public dollar is not going to build a classroom, pay a classroom teacher (italics mine), or buy a text or library book, don't spend it" (Pensacola News Journal (PNJ) 8A). Is he terribly off base? Is this statement really debatable from the standpoint of teachers who work with students daily? Where is the public (and private) dollar going? Certainly not to adjuncts!

I'm not sure that all adjuncts are being blatantly exploited by administrators or the Powers-That-Be, but I do know that we are willfully (though subtlely), ignored and woefully underpaid in comparison to our full-time counterparts. Even the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) recognizes that adjuncts are not treated fairly, especially when it comes to pay. AAUP offers the following monetary guidelines for compensation of part-time employees:

Compensation for part-time employment should be the

corresponding fraction for a full-time position having qualitatively similar responsibilities and qualifications. Compensation should include such essential fringe benefits as health insurance, life insurance, and retirement contributions. (AAUP Non-Tenure Track pamphlet)

I won't even attempt (though I'm tempted) to discuss the significantly higher wages and generous benefits of other university employees (non-faculty) who do not necessarily provide better services than adjuncts do.

Nationwide, adjuncts are paid $1,605 (on average) per course (taa 9). UWF English Department adjuncts receive $1,300 for each course taught per semester. English Department adjuncts at a well-respected junior college in town receive even less--$1,000 per course. A point of interest--A former UWF English adjunct instructor who is now working as a teaching assistant at the University of Florida receives $2,000 for every course that she teaches, plus $1,000 a semester in tuition wavers--more than twice what she was paid as an adjunct at UWF. Has she suddenly become more valuable? I know the payroll system is different and that UF is well-endowed, but doesn't this sudden inequity seem a little unusual? Aren't adjuncts worth at least $2,000? Another local example: One adjunct from our department just left to take a full-time position (a nine-month contract) at $29,000 to do essentially the same work that she was doing here. Has her value suddenly increased by over

$20,000?

Q. How many of you make at least $2,000 per course?

A. One-$2,000.

Q. How many of you make less than $2,000 per course?

A. All-30. ($1,350 the least amount--excluding UWF)

For my $1,300 "stipend," I have taught (since 1992) Composition II, Expository Writing, Western Literature I and II and have traveled to four local high schools (in one semester) to supervise student teachers--three times accepting these assignments at the eleventh hour. Is $1,300 a course all a classroom teacher and supervisor is worth?

Could gender play a part in any of this inequity of recognition and compensation? I notice that most of you in the room today are women, probably all adjuncts. Is this number unusual? Is teaching writing or introductory literature courses women's work? Listen to Dr. Sledd again: "A male-dominated professoriate has indeed treated composition-teaching as mainly women's work. One result has been that many competent and articulate women are among composition's best yet angriest teachers" (Sledd. JAC 279). Why?

According to Dr. Sledd, many full-timers seem to believe that the largely female "underclass" of adjuncts does not really count. How can this be? Locally, twelve of the adjuncts in the UWF English Department are female; three are male. An unusual situation? No. Our department, I suspect, is a microcosm of all composition programs in America. In the

California state system in 1988-89, 61% of part-timers were female (Cayton 647-60). For better or for worse, the gender pattern seems to be set for most four-year and two-year institutions of higher learning. Two-year community colleges, according to statistics, depend heavily on female "help." Findings from a 1991 survey revealed that the "overwhelming majority of part-time faculty teaching at private and public community colleges [in a 19-state-area] were females (73%)" (Kroll 39). The percentage has probably remained the same up to the present time.

Rather pessimistically, Cara Chell, once a part-time lecturer in English, wrote in 1982 that women who "have employed husbands [can] better afford exploitation" (Chell 37); she wondered if adjuncts, mostly women, will become "a lower class of academics to do the dirty work of our department" (35).

Maybe conditions for female adjuncts have changed for the better in a small way over the past fifteen years, but the wheels of academic progress and enlightenment grind very slowly, especially for women.

All things considered, why, then, if we (of both genders) are unappreciated, underpaid, and overworked, do we take jobs as adjuncts? Well, I call it my community service; my office mate jokingly calls it her hobby. And a certain amount of truth exists in these tongue-in-cheek answers. For both us, however, a deep seriousness underlies our joking. As contributors to the department, to the university, and to

the community, we want our work to be acknowledged, and we want our efforts to be taken seriously, both academically and monetarily. We believe that adjuncts, especially those who are hired to fill the "lower" positions of Composition I and II, the "grunt courses" as one of the "regulars" calls them, play as important a role as "regular" teachers do in students' lives and in their academic successes (and sometimes failures).

[TRANSPARENCY #3/ DEFINITION OF AN ADJUNCT]

Let's look at the definition of an adjunct. Webster's Dictionary defines an adjunct as "something joined or added to another thing but not essentially a part of it; joined or associated, esp. in an auxiliary or subordinate relationship." Really?? According to Anne Cassebaum, at the post-secondary level, 38% of teaching is done by adjunct faculty ("Adjuncts with an Attitude?" 1). The AAUP claims it is now 40 percent (AAUP pamphlet). In the March 3, 1997, issue of U.S. News and World Report, Jack Schuster, a professor at the Claremont Graduate School in Claremont, California, reports that "43 percent of all instructors today are hired on a part-time basis--about twice as many as was the case two decades age" (qtd.in Fischer 60). Judith Moehs in "Writing Standards: Linking Part-Time and Full-Time Instructors" says that by 2000 more than half of the classes nationwide will be taught by adjuncts (50). Adjuncts are non-essential subordinates? Statistics prove otherwise.

Grusin and Reed in a 1994 study show that "thirty-eight to fifty-seven percent of instruction in U.S. higher education (four-year and graduate institutions) is done by associate faculty [a full-time position]" (qtd. in Dixson 1). Just how far is the descent into "adjunctory" for associates, some of whom are now in a tenuous position? One of my full-time "regular" friends at UWF tells of a Princeton professor who predicts that if the system does not change, everyone will eventually be an adjunct. Not a pleasant prospect, but if all faculty were untenured "part-timers," no doubt vociferous protests would quickly produce equitable results.

Because the current academic climate is unstable, "subordinates" (adjuncts) should definitely be considered a part of the entire academic community, not only for the sake of equality but also because numbers and solidarity translate into power. However (to quote Anne Cassebaum again), we learn what many "regulars" say or think about adjuncts. We are being undercut by our own fellow teachers:

TRANSPARENCY #4/DAMAGED GOODS

DAMAGED GOODS

"Who are these new people? I can't even learn their names!"

"They work for so little: they can't be putting in much time."

"They're not as qualified as we are, and they don't teach as well."

"We're professionals, and they're not."

"If they're good, they'd get a real job." (2-4)

As we all know, these statements are undeserved, insulting, and false in regard to the majority of adjuncts. We do have names and are physically present in offices, classrooms, meetings, and hallways. We prepare as diligently as the "regulars" do, and in many cases, we are more qualified to teach some classes because we are more aware of students' abilities and needs--especially because we do so much work at the first-year level. Many of us have taught in other school systems and/or have had other academic experiences. We <u>are</u> professionals--or we wouldn't be teaching at this level. Some of us <u>want</u> real jobs (translated: full-time jobs) but cannot find them because, unfortunately, they do not abound in academia today. On the other hand, some of us <u>choose</u> to remain adjuncts for various reasons. As "non-regular" faculty, however, most of us as part-time "help"--by necessity or by choice--are quite expendable.

To acquire a knowledge base, of course, takes patience and perseverance. Most adjuncts, like the "regular" faculty, do not neglect scholarship. No teacher of any value wants to see his or her students poorly served. Based upon how we are perceived by many, however, including administrators, "regulars," and perhaps students and community, does "scholarship" <u>have</u> any relevance to adjunct faculty? It most certainly does! My part-time colleagues <u>care</u> about what happens in their classrooms, <u>care</u> about how students respond to new assignments, and are willing, if necessary, to

redesign composition or literature courses to meet their students' needs.

Scholarship, of course, has a variety of definitions. Ernest L. Boyer, in a report entitled Scholarship Reconsidered, published by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Princeton 1990), claims that the "dominant view" of a scholar "is to be a researcher--and publication is the primary yardstick by which scholarship is measured" (2). Although our adjunct colleagues nationwide publish less than five percent of national journal articles, several adjuncts in the English Department at UWF have published numerous articles, poems, short works of fiction and non-fiction, and two books at the regional level. Historically, these adjuncts have followed the traditional pattern of scholarship.

Boyer suggests, however, that "'scholarship'" be given a "broader, more capacious meaning" (16) and not be restricted simply to straight research and publishing. His wider definition of scholarship includes "four separate, yet overlapping functions....the scholarship of discovery; the scholarship of integration; the scholarship of application; and the scholarship of teaching" (16).

[TRANSPARENCY #5/A MODEL FOR SCHOLARSHIP]

A MODEL FOR SCHOLARSHIP

The Scholarship of DISCOVERY

The Scholarship of INTEGRATION

The Scholarship of APPLICATION

The Scholarship of TEACHING

Boyer defines discovery as research--the "disciplined, investigative efforts" (17) which, he believes, should be strengthened, not diminished. He realizes, as most of us do, that the "discovery of new knowledge is absolutely crucial" (18).

He extends the traditional necessity of discovery, further, however, by adding to it the scholarship of integration--which means "making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating nonspecialists, too" (18). Let me explain how, in addition to participating in traditional or discovery research, our adjuncts at UWF have demonstrated this quality of integration. One example: three of us from the composition staff offered to show history teaching assistants how to read and effectively assess student history papers and examinations. Both the history professors and the new and returning TAs appreciated the extra time we adjuncts took (without pay) to help the assistants in a non-threatening, non-invasive way. Everyone benefitted--they, from new knowledge and we, from the "spill-over" effect.

The third element Boyer mentions is the scholarship of application. Can adjuncts possibly have knowledge and skills that are applicable to life outside the classroom? Again, the answer is an unqualified yes. Let me give you another

example from our department in regard to community activities: One of our adjuncts is the coordinator of a writing contest sponsored annually by the local library. She and I have both been judges of the student essays submitted by various teachers from different schools; we have used our skills (voluntarily) to move outside the classroom into a larger context. The same coordinator, I might mention, was one of the unpaid organizers and performers in two extremely well-attended readings of African-American literature which involved students and faculty from UWF and the local junior college, as well as several community members. This "invisible" adjunct has also reviewed books for library community presentations and has served as editor of The Legend, a publication of a local literary federation.

Additionally, our adjuncts have sat on several boards, have volunteered in adult literacy programs, have been active in the American Association of University Women, have written articles for the Gulf Coast Environmental Defense Association and the Naval Institute, have given poetry readings at the Pensacola Art Museum and in other local places, and have planned and participated in workshops for local aspiring writers. The contributions go on and on. Scholarly service given willingly by our adjuncts has definitely enriched the Pensacola area.

The last division of scholarship is the one of teaching. We all acknowledge that hard work and serious study are the cornerstones of good teaching. 'Aristotle said, 'Teaching is

the highest form of understanding'" (qtd. in Boyer 23). Is it possible that adjuncts can be "widely read and intellectually engaged"? (Boyer 23). Without a doubt. In addition to grading papers and preparing class work, our adjuncts have designed and taught new courses such as Black American Writers, English for Speakers of Other Languages (including English as a second language in Korea and Japan); have delivered academic papers in Alabama, Arizona, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Virginia, and in all regions of Florida; have started AP and dual enrollment programs at local high schools; have conducted holistic grading sessions for the Department; and have read AP and GMAT essays for the Educational Testing Service in Texas and New Jersey. I'm sure many of you could produce a similar list of accomplishments by adjuncts in your schools.

We all try new methods of teaching at UWF, especially in the composition classrooms, changing textbooks and materials as necessary--sharing ideas (some realistic, some purely idealistic) among ourselves--not sensing a need to engage in the 'turfguarding' or ego-building that we sometimes observe around us. Since we are "free" from the demands of seeking publication and tenure (a mixed blessing), we can devote time and attention to effective teaching. We share with new adjuncts and TAs what we have garnered through experience because we remember all too well being "new" ourselves. (Of course, we offer our help without hope of better wages, tenure, or publicity.)

In conclusion, I find that many adjuncts meet, or surpass, all of Boyer's expanded definitions of scholarship. We adjuncts do have the capability to discover, to integrate, to apply, and to teach. We, must, however, make our full range of talents known--we must not simply lurk in the shadows, the swamps, or the brothels. Even worse, we must not remain invisible. We "stepchildren" need to become vital, vocal, and highly visible in regard to what we want, what we need, and what we deserve. There are hundreds of thousands of us, and we teach millions of students each year. Inclusion in the professoriate should be automatic. As professionals, we must demand full academic recognition as scholars and, as a required by-product, full monetary recognition as well.

[TRANSPARENCY #6/AIN'T I A SCHOLAR?]

AIN'T I A SCHOLAR?

YES!!

Sojourner Truth once asked the question, "Ain't I a Woman?" You and I could ask the same question by changing one word: 'Ain't I a Scholar?' We know the answer. LET'S SHARE THE NEWS!

[TRANSPARENCY #7/QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER]

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How can we show that adjuncts are scholars, not just in the narrowest sense of "publish or perish," but in all senses?
2. How can we receive greater visibility in our colleges and universities? How can we break the "wall of separation" that divides us from the "regulars"?
3. How can we show that the scholarship of <u>discovery</u>, <u>integration</u>, <u>application</u>, and <u>teaching</u> is as important in composition as in any other discipline?

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DOONESBURY
BY GARRY TRUDEAU
CAMPBELL, AM I DREAMING? ARE THESE BUDGET NUMBERS REAL?
YES, SIR. WALDEN IS FINALLY BACK IN THE BLACK!
HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?
TUITION HIKES PLUS GETTING RID OF TENURE.
AMAZING— AND WE CAN STILL ATTRACT COMPETENT FACULTY?
TRUST ME, SIR. IT'S A BUSINESS MAJOR.

Tallahassee Democrat, Sept 9, 1996, pg 8A

DOONESBURY
BY GARRY TRUDEAU
EVANS? KING HERE! YOU FOUND THAT BOOK LIBRARIAN YET? WE GOT 100 KIDS WAITING IN COMMONS HALL!
HOLD ON, SIR...
LISTEN UP, PEOPLE! I NEED A REMEDIAL ECONOMIST FOR A ONE-SEMESTER LECTURE GIG. ANY TAKERS?
WILL ANYONE HIRE!
WHAT'S YOUR RECOMMENDATION?
A LIVING WAGE, AND TO BE TREATED LIKE A HUMAN BEING!
SORRY, SIR— I'LL KEEP LOOKING.
OKAY, OKAY, FORGET THE ALPHABETIZING PART!

Tallahassee Democrat, Sept 11, 1996, pg 9A

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